



## UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
[www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov)

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/580,063	01/09/2007	Michael Hopkinson	70346	3539
26748	7590	03/17/2009	EXAMINER	
SYNGENTA CROP PROTECTION, INC. PATENT AND TRADEMARK DEPARTMENT 410 SWING ROAD GREENSBORO, NC 27409			BROWN, COURTNEY A	
ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER			
			1616	
NOTIFICATION DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
03/17/2009		ELECTRONIC		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

[department-gso.patent@syngenta.com](mailto:department-gso.patent@syngenta.com)

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 10/580,063	<b>Applicant(s)</b> HOPKINSON ET AL.
	<b>Examiner</b> COURTNEY BROWN	Art Unit 1616

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
  - If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
  - Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED. (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 November 2008.
- 2a) This action is FINAL.      2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-32 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 12-14 and 30-32 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:  
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1668)  
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application  
 6) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**DETAILED ACTION**

***Acknowledgement of Receipt/Status of Claims***

This Office Action is in response to the amendment filed November 5, 2008.

Claims 1-32 are pending in the application. Claims 12-14 and 30-32 have been withdrawn as being directed to a non-elected invention. Claims 1-11 and 15-29 are being examined for patentability.

Rejections not reiterated from the previous Office Action are hereby withdrawn. The following rejections and/or objections are either reiterated or newly applied. They constitute the complete set of rejections and/or objections presently being applied to the instant application.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

Art Unit: 1616

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

The rejection of claims 1,2,8-11,15,16, and 19-29 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hacker et al. (US 2003/0186816 A1) in view of Koltzenburg et al. (US 2007/0122436 A1) is maintained.

*Applicant's Invention*

Applicant claims a suspoemulsion formulation comprising: (A) a continuous aqueous phase; (B) (i) a dispersed emulsion phase comprising at least one liquid, water-insoluble active ingredient comprising mixtures of metalachlor (S) and (R) isomers (an acetamide herbicide);(ii) an emulsifier in an amount sufficient to emulsify the liquid, water-insoluble active ingredient; (C) (i) a herbicidally effective amount of mesotrione comprising metal chelates selected from the group consisting of copper or zinc chelates and having a particle size of less than 800 nanometers as a dispersed solid phase;(iv) a dispersing agent in an amount sufficient to disperse the mesotrione as any other solid technical materials present in the formulation; wherein the solid phase is dispersed in said aqueous and/or emulsion phase; (D) at least one safener selected from the group consisting of benoxacor and dichlormid; and (E) at least one additional solid, water-insoluble active ingredient selected form the group of triazine and sulfonylurea herbicides selected from the group consisting of glyphosate, glufosinate, and agriculturally acceptable salts thereof. Applicant also claims a pesticidal composition (further consisting at least one member selected from the group consisting of co-herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, acaricides, and nematicides) that is obtained by diluting said suspoemulsion formulation in water.

***Determination of the scope and the content of the prior art  
(MPEP 2141.01)***

Hacker et al. teach herbicide combinations comprising active compounds such as mesotrione, glufosinate, glyphosate (abstract, claims 1, 8, 9,11,25,27, and 29 of instant application), and benoxacor ([0087], claims 19, 22, and 23 of instant application)

that can be formulated as a suspoemulsion ([0074], claims 15-29 of instant application). Hacker et al. teach the preparation of emulsifiable concentrates with the addition of one or more ionic or nonionic surfactants (emulsifiers) ([0150], claim 15 of instant application). Additionally, Hacket et al. teach that the active combinations can exist together with further agrochemically active compounds, additives, and/or customary formulation auxiliaries which are applied as a dilution with water ([0145], claims 10 and 28 of instant application).

***Ascertainment of the difference between the prior art and the claims  
(MPEP 2141.02)***

The difference between the invention of the instant application and that of Hacker et al. is that the instant invention requires that the mesotrione component has an average particle size of less than 1 micron. For this reason, the teaching of Koltzenburg et al. is joined. Koltzenburg et al. teach nanoparticulate formulations comprising at least one active compound (abstract) such as mesotrione, glyphosate, and glufosinate, ([0058], claims 1,6,7,9,11,15 ,24,25, and 27 of instant application). Koltzenburg et al. teach that the mean particle size of the active compounds is preferably less than 500 nanometers and particularly preferably less than 100 nanometers ([0109], claims 1,2,15, and 16 of instant application). Additionally, Koltzenburg et al. teach that the active compound formulations can exist in the form of suspoemulsions or emulsifiable concentrates ([0141], claims 15-29 of instant application).

***Finding of prima facie obviousness***

***Rationale and Motivation (MPEP 2142-2143)***

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the teachings of the two cited references to arrive at a pesticidal composition having an active component has an average particle size of less than 1 micron. Both references teach the use of active compounds mesitrione, glyphosate, and glufosinate and the forming suspoemulsion formulations. One would have been motivated to make this combination in order to receive the expected benefit of increasing the solubility, dispersibility, and bioavailability of the active compound particles due to reducing the particle size. "It would be *prima facie* obvious to combine two methods each of which is taught by the prior art to be useful for the same purpose in order to form a resultant method that is to be used for the very same purpose; the idea of combining them flows logically from their having been individually taught in prior art." In re Kerkhoven, 205 USPQ 1069 (C.C.P.A. 1980).

The rejection of Claims 1-11, 15, and 19-29 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hacker et al. (US 2003/0186816 A1) in view Nabors et al. (US 2005/0233907 A1) **is maintained.**

***Determination of the scope and the content of the prior art  
(MPEP 2141.01)***

The teachings of Hacker et al. are incorporated herein by reference and are therefore applied in the instant rejection as discussed above.

***Ascertainment of the difference between the prior art and the claims  
(MPEP 2141.02)***

The difference between the invention of the instant application and that of Hacker et al. is that the instant invention requires an acetamide herbicide component, specifically mixtures of metalachlor (S) and (R) isomers. For this reason, the teaching of Nabors et al. is joined. Nabors et al. teach novel synergistic compositions comprising acetamide herbicides such as mixtures of the (R) and (S) isomers of metolachlor wherein the ratio of (S)-2-chloro-N-(2-ethyl-6- -methylphenyl)-N-(2-methoxy-1-methylethyl)acetamide to (R)-2-chloro-N-(2-ethyl-6-methylphenyl)-N-(2-methoxy-1-methylethyl)acetamide is in the range of from 50-100% to 50-0%, preferably 70-100% to 30-0% and more preferably 80-100% to 20-0% for the selective control of weeds ([0010], claims 19-21 of instant application). Nabors et al. also teach the use of co-herbicides such as mesotrione, glyphosate, and glufosinate ([0020], claims

1,6,7,9,15,25,27, and 28 of instant application) and formulating the synergistic composition into a suspoemulsion ([0036], claims 15-29 of instant application).

***Finding of prima facie obviousness***

***Rationale and Motivation (MPEP 2142-2143)***

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the teachings of the two cited references to arrive at a suspoemulsion pesticidal formulation that has an acetamide herbicide component. Both references teach the use of active compounds mesotrione, glyphosate, and glufosinate and the possibility of suspoemulsion formulations. One would have been motivated to make this combination in order to receive the expected benefit of having a pesticidal composition that is able to control the majority of weeds occurring in crops of cultivated plants due to the selectivity of acetamide herbicides. "It would be *prima facie* obvious to combine two methods each of which is taught by the prior art to be useful for the same purpose in order to form a resultant method that is to be used for the very same purpose; the idea of combining them flows logically from their having been individually taught in prior art." In re Kerkhoven, 205 USPQ 1069 (C.C.P.A. 1980).

The rejection of claims 1, 6-11, 15,17, and 18 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hacker et al. (US 2003/0186816 A1) in view of Cornes (US 6,924,250) is maintained.

***Determination of the scope and the content of the prior art  
(MPEP 2141.01)***

The teachings of Hacker et al. are incorporated herein by reference and are therefore applied in the instant rejection as discussed above.

***Ascertainment of the difference between the prior art and the claims  
(MPEP 2141.02)***

The difference between the invention of the instant application and that of Philipp et al. is that the instant invention requires that the mesotrione component is in the form of a metal chelate. For this reason, the teaching of Cornes is joined. Cornes teach synergistic herbicidal compositions comprising mesotrione and a second herbicide selected from triazines (abstract, claims 1,6, 7, and 15 of instant application). Cornes teach that the mesotrione component can be used in the form of a copper chelate (column 2, lines 12-16, claims 17 and 18 of instant application). Cornes also teach the use of an additional herbicide such as glyphosate (column 3, lines 60-65, claim 9 of instant application) and the use of emulsifying agents for the formulation of emulsifiable concentrates (column 4, lines 35-45, claim 15 of instant application).

***Finding of prima facie obviousness***

***Rationale and Motivation (MPEP 2142-2143)***

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the teachings of the two cited references to arrive at a suspoemulsion pesticidal formulation that has a mesotrione component in the form of a metal chelate. Both references teach the use of mesotrione and glyphosate in a herbicidal composition. One would have been motivated to make this combination in order to receive the expected benefit of having metal chelates of mesotrione which are chemically stable for long periods of time under normal as well as extreme temperature conditions (see abstract of US Patent 5,912,207). "It would be *prima facie* obvious to combine two methods each of which is taught by the prior art to be useful for the same purpose in order to form a resultant method that is to be used for the very same purpose; the idea of combining them flows logically from their having been individually taught in prior art." In re Kerkhoven, 205 USPQ 1069 (C.C.P.A. 1980).

***Examiner's Response to Applicant's Remarks***

Applicant's arguments filed on November 5, 2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant argues that Hacker et al. relates to herbicide combinations wherein mesotrione just happens to be one of 57 compounds and may

(amongst others) be provided as a suspension concentrate or suspoemulsions and that there is no specific teaching of a suspension concentrate or suspoemulsion comprising mesotrione. The Examiner disagrees because Applicant claims a suspension concentrate comprising additional active ingredients (see claims 6 and 7 of instant application). Hacker et al. do teach herbicide combinations comprising active compounds such as mesotrione, glufosinate, glyphosate and benoxacor that can be formulated as a suspoemulsion.

Applicant also argues that Koltzenburg et al. relates to a nanoparticulate formulation comprising at least one active compound wherein mesotrione just happens to be one of a vast number of the "active compounds" contained within the substantial "boilerplate" provided and that it can be seen from the specific examples provided by Koltzenburg et al. that the invention is primarily directed towards fungicide compositions and that there is no particular focus on herbicides, let alone mesotrione or even sub-micron mesotrione formulations. However, the Examiner disagrees because Koltzenburg et al. do teach nanoparticulate formulations comprising at least one active compound such as mesotrione, glyphosate, and glufosinate. Koltzenburg et al. teach that the mean particle size of the active compounds is preferably less than 500 nanometers and particularly preferably less than 100 nanometers. Additionally, the Examiner wants to remind Applicant that when establishing a case of *prima facie* obviousness, the whole reference is considered.

Next, Applicant argues that one of ordinary skill would have no reasonable expectation that combining the teachings of Hacker et al. and Koltzenburg et al. would

provide a suspension concentrate or suspoemulsion formulation comprising mesotrione with improved physical storage stability, handling and in particular dilution characteristics because neither reference is specifically concerned with such formulations. However, the Examiner disagrees because the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., a suspension concentrate or suspoemulsion formulation comprising mesotrione with improved physical storage stability, handling and in particular dilution characteristics) are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

Lastly, Applicant argues that in reaching a conclusion of obviousness, the Patent and Trademark Office must consider the "invention as a whole," which includes evidence of the invention's unexpected results. Applicant argues that the experiments and data referred to in Table 2 of the instant specification show that the redispersion properties of sediment material and how these are improved when sub-micron mesotrione is used. Upon considering the data in Table 2 of the instant specification, the Examiner agrees that the formulation prepared from the mesotrione millbase having an average particle size (i.e., less than one micron) within the scope of instant claims was significantly easier to re-disperse than the formulations containing the mesotrione millbase outside the scope of the instant invention. However, these results are not unexpected. Koltzenburg et al. teach that it is known that solubility, dispersibility and bioavailability of active compound particles can be increased by expanding the particle

surface area, i.e. by reducing the particle size at an identical total amount ( see [0004] and [0109]). Koltzenburg et al. additionally teach that the preferable mean particle size of the active compounds is less than 500 nanometers and particularly preferably less than 100 nanometers ([0109]) which is within the scope of the instant claims.

Therefore, the claimed invention as a whole would have been *prima facie* obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made because every element of the invention has been fairly suggested by the cited references.

The claims remain rejected.

#### ***Conclusion***

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR Only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electron Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Examiner Courtney Brown, whose telephone number is 571-270-3284. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 8 am to 4:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's Supervisor, Johann Richter can be reached on 571-272-0646. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Courtney A. Brown  
Patent Examiner  
Technology Center 1600  
Group Art Unit 1616

/Johann R. Richter/  
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1616